

# Imperial India



LETTERS FROM THE EAST.

By

John Oliver Hobbes

LONDON: T. FISHER UNWIN

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BY

( JOHN OLIVER HOBBS [pseud.] )



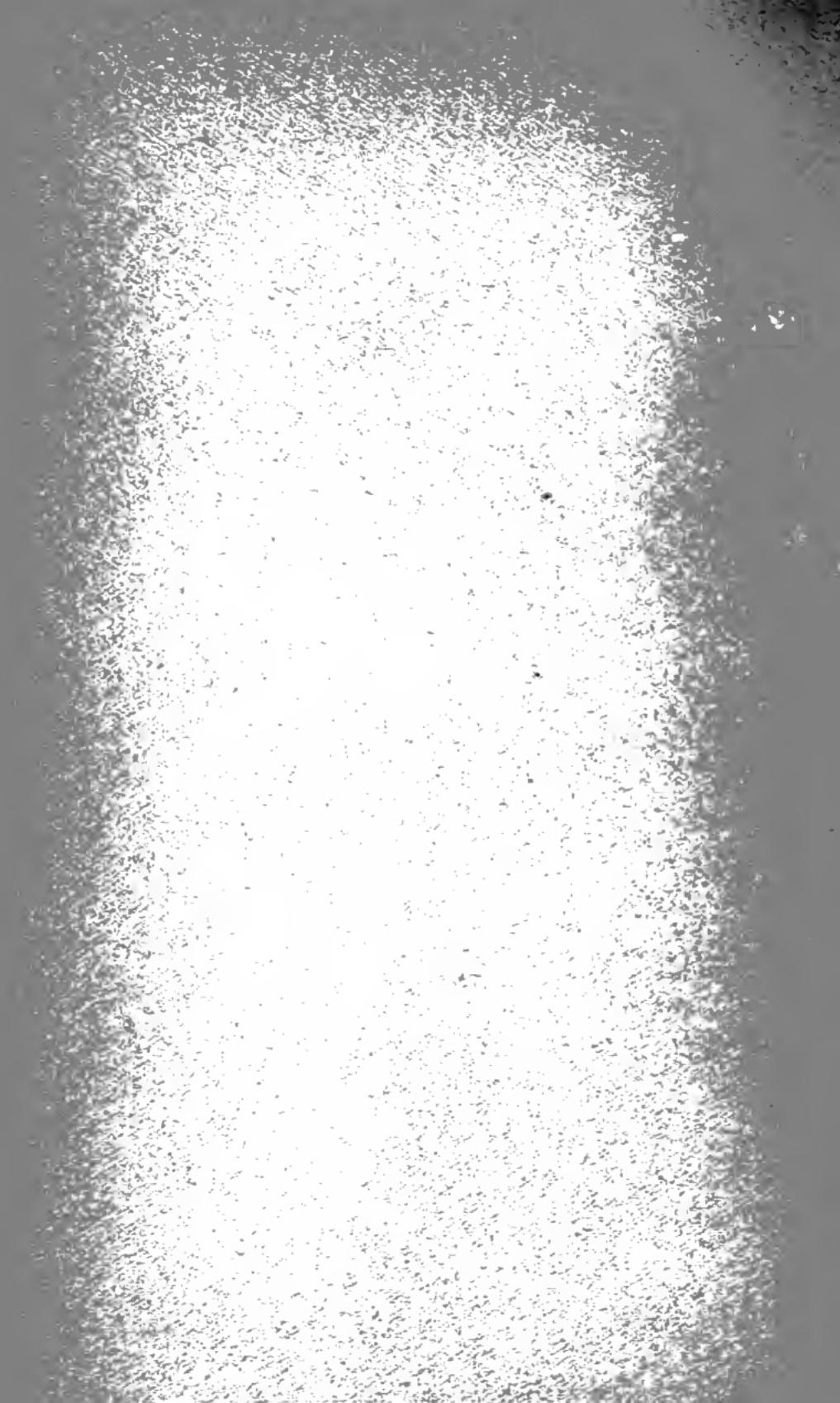
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# IMPERIAL INDIA

## I

### TO DELHI FOR THE DURBAR

At half-past four in the morning, while the stars made the city lights seem little more than candle flames, and the bright moon made the harbour signals mere spots of glowing red, I saw Bombay, a dark, low mass against the sky, for the first time. It was the one still hour of my voyage, for our journey had been a long conversation, occasionally interrupted by short nights of rest in the flattered Mediterranean, the hot Red Sea, and the sleepless Indian Ocean, by picturesque delays at Port Said, the Suez Canal, and Aden. Cynics (some of them more disillusioned than the worldly,

some less confident than the much deceived, and all eager to foretell little miseries) had promised me an embarrassing expedition. It was said that in so large a party—forty bound for the Viceroy's camp, and as many promised to other distinguished hosts—quarrels would arise (sea air is irritating to the nervous system); there would be coteries, cabals, and cliques; a number of sets, equal in importance, but distant and distinct in their pursuits, interests, amusements, and, one might say, habits, were represented in the ship's company; acquaintances would take sides, and friends who had set forth inseparably together would return with dolorous memories of an association too close, unaccustomed, and strained for ever dividing them.

Beyond doubt, the tendency in English society is towards parochialism, or rather provincialism, in the point of view. English-women are known to be difficult travellers and suspicious of new faces; they confuse the notion conveyed by the common phrase, "*tres grande dame*," with the beneficent condescen-

sion of a lady bountiful towards obscure, illiterate, and servile dependants ; they often mistake the formal precedence given by titles or official rank for some actual superiority in tissue ; independence of spirit bewilders, repels, terrifies them, and they are annoyed at any demonstration of what is called personality in idea, ideals, or conduct ; each will permit herself or her satellites a good deal of acute eccentricity in dress and manner, but it is always the eccentricity of the amateur—it is rarely spontaneous, original, or convincing. In fact, Englishwomen can seldom become citizenesses of the world—the legitimate heiresses of a vast Empire—without losing altogether the note, which should be dominant, of their own Mother Country. If they are found charming in cosmopolitan society, they usually seem unsympathetic in England, out of tune with Londoners, ill at ease, misunderstood, distrusted in county country-houses.

The great success, either in diplomatic, or military, or political, or aristocratic circles abroad,

is seldom popular at home. He or she has gained a larger vision, a flexibility in thought, an impatience under arbitrary local pettinesses in every disguise. The return of the native means too often the return of the utterly estranged.

These considerations were filling my mind when I left Marseilles for the East. I wondered how the guests invited to the spectacle of the Durbar would regard their fellow-subjects ; whether, in truth, the Imperialism of the times was a case of rhetoric or a matter of instinct—a passing question of party politics or an entailment by irresistible destiny. It is delightful to be able to say, with truth, how agreeable life on board actually proved

During the day people talked, played bridge, walked, read, and slept ; in the evening there would be music, or dancing, or more bridge, or more talking. Had some unprepared foreigner joined the party at Suez or Aden, he would have thought that Britons had at last lost all their least genial qualities, and suddenly become as charming as they were

dutiful. And, as I have said, the talk was incessant. Among the men every profession was represented by one of its most distinguished members ; every interest had its follower. The women were unusually remarkable in their appearance and their amiability ; they showed a real disposition to spend the hours in kindness. The small steamer, therefore, which conveyed the Viceroy's party from the *Arabia* to the private landing-stage contained the best-humoured, the most animated, the least affected crowd ever seen in English society of the present day. No one was bored, no one pretended to be bored. It is encouraging to find that pretentiousness of this minute and ridiculous kind is no longer considered a sign of good breeding ; the fashion now runs toward joyousness loudly, even uncouthly, demonstrated. Who is not grateful to see absurdity die out, and naturalness revive, on any terms ?

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## FIRST IMPRESSIONS OF BOMBAY

The spirit and pride of Empire must fill the heart of the least ambitious Englishman when he sets foot on Indian soil and beholds the life, the colour, the imposing buildings, the strangeness, the fascination of the city of Bombay. We were driven swiftly in small victorias from the docks to the railway station, but during those brilliant moments when one unforgettable impression succeeded another as weird and unforgettable—(the light in the East makes every scene a permanent silhouette in one's mind—nothing here is elusive)—I saw, for me, a whole new continent revealed—new in feeling, action, motive, form, philosophy, thought, achievement. The eternal energy of the world was manifesting itself in ways, for objects, on principles and under conditions magnificently unfamiliar to the European. Yet this was the point for wonder and exaltation ; it had all been organised, it is now governed and subdued by Englishmen, who,

having inherited England's prejudices and traditions, had received the great advantage of an English education and suffered the disadvantage of English insularity. Imperialism in the ordinary London man seems, and is, vanity ; to foreigners, who have never visited India and the colonies, it is the last feather straggling on a moulting peacock. But let the satirist come to Bombay—even for an hour—he need not go further ; he will admit freely, and no more doubt the vigour of the Anglo-Saxon or his stability to hold a vast possession. The conviction was not called out by the sight of large buildings, carts driven by white bullocks, or groups of natives in brilliant turbans and dull rags. The first impression of Bombay may be compared to the first impression of New York—power and enterprise are in the air ; but whereas New York has already an appearance of too much luxury, too much ease, and of being, as it were, the haunt of mere pleasure lovers, Bombay, built as Venice was built, on small islands, seems still in her first youth—a rising city, immature,

not over-rich ; a city where all men go forth early to their labours, and dream at night of ambitions hardly to be fulfilled, of wishes which must wait, at best, for many a year before they may be gratified ; a city of patient hearts, watchful eyes, hopes long deferred.

Our party had brought between us forty-seven tons of dresses and uniforms for the Durbar festivities ; there was no time to look at Bombay while boxes so valuable had to be collected, sorted, and stacked in the special train bound for Delhi. As it was, we left the station nearly two hours late. For two days and a night we rushed in the heat and dust and cold past cities with curious names, and scenes from old picture-books, and groups of lean Hindoos, decently naked. We saw vultures waiting for the dead, and pelicans, wild green parrots, and monkeys ; starving, sore dogs, thin pigs, weak goats ; sweetmeat, flower, and fruit sellers, coolies, lascars, sweepers, tillers and cultivators of the soil, sturdy native infantry, English soldiers, poor Brahmins superb with caste marks, pilgrims bound for

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the tomb of Salim Christi, every kind and description of small boy, vagabond, and adventurer waiting at the various stations to see the trains, to do a little bargaining, stealing, or conjuring, to get carried on possibly, by good luck, to the camp at Delhi. The tracts of country between the halting-places suggested only the desert and despair ; sandy roads and flat, interminable plains, which, in spite of their desolation, seemed invisibly inhabited perhaps by unhappy ghosts, perhaps by some of the despised baser sort of native, with meek, famishing eyes and brittle limbs. There is a force in these plains as cruel and as forbidding, as deep and as hungry as the sea ; there is, one feels, a world of worlds engulfed in the barren soil ; it has a fearful vitality — the ruined city of Fatehpur—Sikri is dead, imperial ancient Rome is dead, Versailles is dead, but the plains breathe as the ocean breathes ; they hold a terror which strikes, captivates, appals the imagination. You look away in weariness—the eternal sameness and aridity hold no plea for your love, but your

eyes will have caught the dull dye of the sand ; the blue dome over Florence, the tenderness of the sky in Touraine, the autumn sunsets off the Hampshire coast will seem unreal and fading impressions after the monochrome of India.

It was Sunday morning when we reached Delhi ; and the platform, decorated with red baize and flags for the Viceroy's State entry on the morrow, was the first exhibition we had seen of characteristic English custom ; but we steamed on to the camp station, where white tents covered the land as far as the sight would reach. It was cold, bright, wonderful, but we had slept all night in a side-line, we had travelled many thousand miles, we were thankful to arrive, we were full of enthusiasm, but we were no longer impressionable. I remember arriving at the large Shamiana, where we had breakfast ; then I was helped into a rickshaw and taken to my own tent, which contained, I noticed, a bed, two wardrobes, a writing-table, easy chairs, books, and electric light. The bugles were sounding for church. I took

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my chair out into the sun and sat staring at the rows of tents opposite and the members of our party passing to and fro, followed by their European servants, their bearers, their ayahs, and carts of luggage. I have seldom felt such cold. I ordered a hot bath while my maid unpacked my muslin dresses and my heaviest furs.

## II

## THE CORONATION DURBAR

THE last Monday of the year was fixed for the Viceroy's State entry into Delhi. Long before seven that morning the bugle was heard echoing through every camp, and those who had slept, awoke, after a cold night, to a piercing day. Pleasure, in such conditions, was to be found not in thought, for there was no time to think ; not in sensation, for frozen bodies and excited brains work unaccountably ; but in impressions which, rapid, veritable, keen and bright, filled up blank regions, never before occupied or discovered, of one's fancy. Yellow dust and glittering mica covered the road, parched our throats, powdered our eyes. We formed a long line of carriages driven by native coachmen, each attended by two footmen, who hung behind, in scarlet livery. The roads were lined by thick-set, smooth-faced

Gurkhas, desperate, immutable Sikhs, fiery Pathans, gallant Highlanders, English and Irish soldiers, sturdy, short, smart, pale and anxious. We saw multitudes of Orientals by the way, who bore living tribute to the photographic unimaginative accuracy of similar groups in Tissot's New Testament. The famous Chandi Chauk (called by some, without reason, the richest street in the world) had stands for its wealthy, wily and amiable merchants ; great Hindoo and Mahomedan ladies were supposed to be watching the crowd from behind the chinks of certain dark windows.

On the Champ de Mars native retinues, camels and elephants—these last drugged for the day, and painted in patterns variously with gamboge and vermillion for the festival —were drawn up to join the rear of the procession as it passed by. We watched this from the great Mosque, with marble cupolas and copper-gilt spires, the Jumma Masjid, built by Shah Jehan's five thousand workmen toiling all day for six years. Crowded in every part by Europeans in uniform or gayest

morning dress, and natives in their most brilliant colours, it presented the effect of a large isolated hill, set with tier upon tier, packed with human beings to the very top. The State entry, seen from this height, looked like the curious old flat woodcuts, drawn without regard to perspective, of historic events in the fourteenth, fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. One saw the splendid, haughty stream winding along more than a mile away, for there were no buildings, trees, or impediments to block the sight. Commissioners headed the procession, then Pathan chiefs, strangely attired; Baluch chiefs, with dark, passionate faces, long hair, and twisted beards; then carriages of English officials, Lord Kitchener and his staff on horseback, then the carriages and staff, and escort, and bodyguards of the Lieutenant-Governor of the Punjab, the Governors of Madras and Bombay, the Grand Duke of Hesse; then the elephants, with the great chiefs and native retainers, indescribably clothed—some in old coats of chain armour over faded rose velvet,

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others in antique brocade, gaudy stuffs, tinsel coats, unbleached, hand-woven linen — an Eastern survival of the old feudal grand seigneurs of Catholic Europe.

The chiefs themselves wore embroidered velvet, satin, and cloth of gold, chains of emeralds and pearls, diamonds and immense white sapphires ; turbans covered with hanging gems, or tiaras set in Paris. One Maharaja, half insensible from opium, had a loyal, benevolent smirk, which could neither fade nor falter, painted, out of purest courtesy, on his inexpressive countenance. On and on they passed, in their howdahs of fantastic design—fifty-five ruling princes of the Indian Empire, from Hyderabad, Baroda, Travancore, Mysore, Kashmir, Central India, Rajputana, Bombay, Bengal, the Punjab, Burma, and the United Provinces. What histories, what traditions, what crimes they represented ! This portion of the procession seemed a horrible medley of the infernal and the grotesque, the ancient barbaric and the modern vulgar, the superb and the squalid, a manifestation of power

without glory, and rank without grace, of riches without beauty, of pomp without philosophy, and pride without strength. All processions of the kind are the same: in Rome, in Seville, in France, in London, these exhibitions display little that is beautiful in the human countenance; here and there one may see a fine face, and <sup>little</sup> ashamed, but most faces bear the fierce light ill. The native spectators looked, but were silent; the Europeans exclaimed, stared, marvelled, appraised extravagantly, were, indeed, dazzled and impressed—mainly by the display of jewels. To the average Western mind, a man who can carry £50,000 in ornaments on his own person is to be regarded with something a little deeper than reverence.

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#### REPRESENTATIVES OF THE KING-EMPEROR

The Duke and Duchess of Connaught were recognised with enthusiasm. The Viceroy,

wearing the blue sash of the Star of India, with her Excellency, a beautiful, gentle lady, sweetly smiling, exquisitely dressed, on his left, sat in a gold and silver howdah, on an elephant from Benares — the finest animal in India. An elephant, however, is not an appropriate animal for Europeans ; the gait of the beast is clumsy ; the howdah looks and is exceedingly uncomfortable. It says much for the personal magnetism of their Royal Highnesses and their Excellencies that they appeared to advantage during the trying and graceless ride. Few men of impatient and authoritative genius could have met, during their own lifetime, with the cordial expressions of appreciation which greeted Lord Curzon when he passed the Jumma Masjid. It is not possible to be at once a just ruler and a popular idol ; the essential charm of an idol, or fetish, lies in its supposed potential and frequently active injustice. But it is equally impossible for the least gracious and bigoted to deny the concentrated devotion, the energy of the intellect, the special distinction of the gifts which have com-

bined to make the present Viceroy's reign so remarkable in the history of the Empire.

The great Durbar, for instance, which took place two days after the State entry, will count beyond question as the most significant, the most brilliant, the most successful pageant of its kind. There were nearly 40,000 troops outside, and 12,000 persons within the amphitheatre. The latter included the chiefs and their personal attendants, high dignitaries, British officials, councillors, governors, generals, every distinguished civil and military officer in all India. Judges in Court robes, Chief Justices, Consuls in uniform, European guests of the highest rank ; and "over one hundred rulers of separate States, whose united population amounts to sixty millions of people, and whose territories extend over 55 degrees of longitude. The officers and soldiers present were drawn from a force in India of nearly 230,000 men—the King's Army. The leaders of Indian society, official and unofficial, present, were the mouthpieces of over 230 million souls. One-fifth, therefore, of the entire human race

was represented in that arena." This is a quotation, which will bear much repetition, from Lord Curzon's impressive and nobly-delivered address. The twelve trumpeters in scarlet and gold, the Royal salute of one hundred and one guns, the firing of the *feu de joie*, the march of the Mutiny veterans, the playing of the massed bands, the homage of the native Princes and the veiled Begum, the dashing Imperial Cadets in their embroidered white tunics, their blue kumerbunds with crimson tassels, and their blue turbans with gold aigrettes, the snow leopard skins on their black chargers ; the Shan chiefs in gold coats like pagodas ; the young Maharaja of Patiqla, a) in pale blue velvet, embroidered with pearls, have all been described by telegraph to every corner of the globe. But the exhilaration, the movement, the atmosphere cannot be telegraphed ; they cannot be reproduced in any form or any language. It may all have been of the earth earthy ; it may have seemed to some the supreme exhibition of that vanity of vanities which, so far from lacking hope, is

full of confidence whether God or no God is in the world. He is sometimes forgotten by small committees ; but among fifty-five thousand souls he can never lack witnesses. And so the Durbar was neither vainglorious, nor a show to impress the better vulgar. It was a worthy expression of all that is best in Imperialism—the desire and aim to administer justice, to deliver the oppressed, to give freedom from anarchy, to dispense mercy in the hour of suffering.

### III

## REFLECTIONS ON THE DURBAR

THE charm—counteracting the inconvenience—of camp life is a matter of fresh air and informality. I have been in large tents, canopied and lined with Kashmir shawls or with painted chintz ; they have had their board floors covered with fine carpets (some I remember were of Persian rose colour —surprisingly beautiful) ; they contained sofas, chairs, tables, bookcases, pianos, pictures, indeed all the familiar furniture of a comfortable room ; but for me, “Pleasure dwells in height”—tents are too close to the earth. I like the sky better, and my contentment during rest, or play, or work depends on my getting a little higher, at least, than the footpath. The enclosure,

moreover, gives me a sense of imprisonment and narrowness, and when there are no windows I miss a consoling glimpse of the world to remind me of the horizon and the illimitable. To live, therefore, for any length of time in a tent—no matter how luxurious—would be to many persons, beyond doubt, a real hardship. But during the ten memorable days at Delhi an unaccustomed shelter seemed, for so long and brilliant a dream, the natural sleeping-place ; the special simplicities of our life gave a rugged basis for what might otherwise have seemed artificial, and proved actually enervating. There is a stage in the relations of any large gathering when people begin to know each other too well to be mere acquaintances, and yet not well enough to be intimate friends. At this point social intercourse becomes a discipline ; its exhibition a test of worldly knowledge, its agreeableness a factor to be determined solely by one's capacity to enjoy shallows and circumscribed areas rather than depths and wide fields. A camp, in these circumstances, has many advantages over a

country house or a yacht ; one's tent is one's refuge—it is less sultry than a room—because it has four entrances which cannot be locked, or barred, or closed ; it is fresher than a cabin ; it is large enough for callers and conversation, for music, for letter-writing.

The large mess-tent, where we all met for our meals, was planned like an Italian villa. The reception-room led into a drawing-room (with side-rooms for cards and smoking), and, from this, one walked through a long passage into a dining-room. Here dinner was served for one hundred and fifty or so of us every evening, in informal parties, at small tables, unless their Excellencies or their Royal Highnesses happened to be present, in which case the arrangement of their tables only was settled beforehand.

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#### THE GIRLS AND SCHOOLBOYS OF THE WORLD

As there were probably several hundred visitors and important officials at other camps, a

series of State banquets took place in the great Shamiana (a flat-roofed tent), near the white pavilion built especially for Lord and Lady Curzon's use during the Durbar. Every guest was invited to one at least of these banquets, which were given with as strict etiquette as they would have been at Government House. English guests, notoriously shy, bored and inelastic on formal occasions, are at their best taken unawares and hurried into merriment ; surprise them out of self-consciousness and you find them the girls and schoolboys of the world—essentially fresh-hearted, kindly-natured, and unspoilt. Affectation and pretentiousness in any form are altogether discouraged at the Court and by the Royal Family ; every competent student of modern manners (a science rather dismal than gay) must have observed that the more distinguished the company in England, the more ingenuous and natural is its tone. This is equally true of the best Anglo-Indian society ; the difference between the London and the Calcutta contingent was marked enough to be interesting,

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but not enough to make comparisons ill-judged. Perhaps the London guests had less worldly wisdom of the riper kind. For instance, the open applause at the Durbar of the Princes who wore the most jewels was an extraordinary, if well-meant, blunder ; the cheering of the 9th Lancers was not excusable on the grounds of its childishness ; the attempt to form small coteries was innocent enough, but inappropriate on an occasion which was cosmopolitan or nothing.

For the rest, the social experiments at the camp were perfectly successful. As I have said, English people are at their best when surprised into agreeableness. On New Year's Eve (to give an example) an impromptu dance sprang up among a few couples after dinner in the mess-tent. The Duke and Duchess of Connaught, who are universally loved for their charming qualities, and the Grand Duke of Hesse came on after a banquet at another camp, and joined the lancers. As the clock struck twelve, every gentleman present wished the Duchess, and every lady present wished the

Duke, a happy New Year. The spontaneity of all this, the sincerity, gaiety, and homeliness, as it were, illustrated everything that is most admirable in the national character ; after the necessary pomp and circumstance of the great public functions, it was specially refreshing, and it will remain among the most delightful memories of that period. The polo ground, where one watched games or listened to the massed bands, was often crowded, and the jewellers' shops in the Chandi Chauk were <sup>7</sup> filled every morning with anxious bargainers for pearls, emeralds, turquoises, or enamel-work. The native merchant squats on the floor in front of a low counter. He has a cheap tin travelling-box by his side, and here, wrapped up in coloured rags or grimy bags, he keeps the astonishing collection of gems, necklaces, charms, and rings which form his stock-in-trade. Occasionally fine stones may be bought in this way ; as a rule, however, Indian jewellery is more effective than exquisite, and the choicest gems are almost universally secured by European and American dealers.

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Nevertheless, there is a strange attraction about an Eastern bazaar. It soon becomes as natural to buy a jewel as it is to choose a hat. The reason why comparatively few people in England are great gem collectors lies in the fact that the shops in Bond Street and Regent Street have a prohibitive, most forbidding air, and women who spend hundreds yearly on their clothes never dream of considering the better and permanent investment offered by the acquisition of precious stones.

Now, if I have spoken so particularly of manners and amusements, it is because it must not be forgotten in considering the Durbar that for the stranger and onlooker it was less a serious political event than a gorgeous, unique, Eastern entertainment, conceived by an administrative genius of the first rank, and achieved with a splendour, a thoughtfulness wholly abnormal. Right, in the sense that a minor clause is always too important to be overlooked, this view, adopted exclusively from the secondary standpoint, was at once too flippant and too narrow. The fact, however,

remains—to most of the strangers it was a gala on the heroic scale. To gazing travellers it was a spectacle infinitely more amusing than an average Jubilee thanksgiving, and better worth the money than a Passion Play or a fortnight at Bayreuth. As a Coronation festival, it was meant to be, and it proved, an exhilarating affair ; but it was not a show, not a circus, not the display of any one individual taste, no matter how perfectly disciplined and justified, for the grandiose. Political exigencies alone could have rendered so costly a pageant desirable, could have given the energy behind it all the necessary power, inspiration, magnetism, in fact, which must be in every triumphant undertaking—whether carried out on miniature local or vast Imperial lines.

The Durbar was held for the Princes and people of India, and the policy of the Viceroy goes toward the cultivation of those talents in the British Government which Joubert attributed to the Roman Catholic Church—“the talent of making herself loved, the talent of making men happy.” Now, avoiding any

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reference to the essential differences between the supreme ecclesiastical authority as it is understood by Roman Catholics, and kingly authority as it is understood by Protestants, it may be allowed, without offending the most delicate religious sensitiveness, that the Vatican, at the height of its secular power, stood, as a political force, in much the same relation toward the countries of Europe as England now stands toward the feudatory States of India. The analogy is broad ; it must not, and need not, be pressed too closely. It will serve its purpose in giving some idea of the situation—the privileges of the native chiefs and the suzerainty of England—a suzerainty, moreover, free from the dangerous and complicated duty of enforcing adhesion to the doctrines of one faith and one Church. In Lord Curzon's view—and at this point it is best to quote from his own addresses—“ the cause of the Indian aristocracy is bound up with the British Government in this country, and stands or falls with it. Native Princes are the natural pillars of the State ; they have that indefinable

quality endearing them to the people that arises from their being born of the soil. It is essential, therefore, to the welfare of a nation that its aristocracy should not be divorced from its public life."

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#### THE RESPONSIBILITIES OF RANK

It must not be supposed, nevertheless, that the present Viceroy forgets, in reminding the chiefs of their prerogatives, to express himself in strong terms on the subject of their responsibilities. "The Princes and nobles in India," he said at Mayo College, "have to fight against a double danger. On the one side is the survival of the archaic idea that rank is a dispensation from work instead of a call to it, and that a chief need do nothing in the world beyond spend the money drawn from his people and enjoy himself. The second danger is that, in our desire to train up the rising generation to a wider conception of their duties, we may

allow their training to run ahead of their opportunities, and may produce in them inclinations or capacities which are unsuited to their surroundings, or for which there is afterwards an insufficient field." From this last remark it is abundantly clear that Lord Curzon does not seek to conjure up those spasmodic ambitions which degenerate always into bitterness, if not active revolution. Nor does he promise the ruler any indulgence. "When wrong things go on in British India," he says, "the light of public criticism beats fiercely upon the person or spot. Native States have no right to claim any immunity from the same process." Again: "The chiefs are called upon to rule not an English but an Indian people. It is not by English models alone, but by an adaptation of Eastern prescription to the Western standard, that the ruler can hope to succeed. . . . He must remain true to his religion, his traditions, and his people."

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## THE ORIENTAL ARISTOCRAT

This, then, was what the Durbar meant—a proclamation of suzerainty, the unification of India under one supreme Government. European Sovereigns know each other. Some of them are closely related, or connected by near family ties. Many of the Indian Princes had never seen their peers before they met on this occasion at Delhi, and here, where race distinctions, from the subtleties of religious belief to the exterior differences of dress, are more decisive than they are in any other continent of the globe, the achievement of making such hereditary strangers acquainted with each other was in itself an action of the highest importance and consequence. At the evening party especially given for the native chiefs, Europeans had an opportunity of being presented to the most remarkable, of observing them closely, and in some cases of conversing with them, either through interpreters or in English. The Oriental aristocrat is better

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studied in a room than on an elephant. He has, as a rule, finely-cut features : eyes which seem to express every possible evil and good emotion at a single glance, an effeminate figure, a clumsy gait, and an air of unmistakable intelligence. It has become a commonplace among the untravelled to speak of the noble Oriental manner, and to contrast the vulgar familiarities of modern European society with the dignity, courtesy, and sublime tact of Eastern etiquette.

A desultory study of Omar Khayyam, *The Arabian Nights*, and *The Light of Asia* has no doubt produced this opinion in the people's mind. No one on the spot would maintain that the deportment of the Indian chiefs could bear comparison with that of well-bred Italians, Frenchmen, or Englishmen. They may be amiable, and a number are probably sincere, but they are curiously lacking in grace or graciousness. The young Princes of the Imperial Cadet Corps have been drilled and disciplined into gallantry, but their distinction in this respect is still so unapproachable

that they have contracted an exaggerated form of that very "swagger" which is most disliked and condemned in certain types of the English cavalry officer. This will pass, of course—mainly because the Anglo-Indian official, whether military or civil, detests any display of what is known as "side." He will not tolerate it, and no egoism could be strong enough, no vanity blind enough, to resist the healthy cure waiting at Simla or in Calcutta for the man or woman with any minute tendency toward self-importance. But meanwhile native noblemen who go abroad assimilate, most unfortunately, all that is astonishing and silly, lamentable and decadent, in Western life. They represent not a new but a most ancient aristocracy ; they gravitate by an instinctive, perhaps irresistible, sympathy toward the many inane, often vicious, descendants of the once powerful families of feudal Europe. They drift about killing time, imagining great passions, squandering money, craving notoriety, stimulating the curiosity and wonder of a multitude too wise to follow their example, but not

wise enough to treat them with indifference. No statesman can foretell, no legislation could prevent, the consequences, good or bad, which must come from the inevitable closer association of rich Orientals with richer Europeans. But whereas the European has the faculty of making money or starting afresh after any loss of fortune or prestige, the Indian chief has no such recuperative power. When he has spent his capital, sold his jewels, his resources are at an end. He has had no training for business. As a "guinea pig"—the last humiliating and fast depreciating mainstay of the impoverished English nobleman—the penniless and landless Maharajah is quite useless. He becomes, indeed, "the brave music of a distant drum."

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#### THE MAKERS OF INDIA

Lord Curzon has uttered the plainest warnings; he has raised the standard of chivalry of

the Indian Princes ; he has proclaimed his belief in them ; he has appealed to them for their own sakes to remember the duties inseparable from high rank ; he has spoken with no double tongue, and from no hidden or sinister or complicated motive in favour of what is certainly the greatest modern development of the feudal system. India, until that system became organised, was a hemisphere of hells. That this is no longer the case is due to the magnificent administrative work done by Englishmen—some of them already famous in history, others patiently obscure, and never now to be remembered outside a small local circle. The native Press, and certain journals in the English Press, which have criticised with much bitterness and more ignorance the pleasures and banquets, the reviews and the balls, enjoyed by the English officials and their friends at Delhi and Calcutta, have quite overlooked the fact that Englishmen work here as they work nowhere else ; that the life means in nearly every instance the hardest possible to a European constitution ; that the duties and responsibilities

are always great and often thankless ; that the rewards for distinguished or faithful service are most inadequate ; that any possible diversion or amusement offered to British residents by the Coronation festivities, as apart from the actual Durbar, ought to have received the heartfelt support of the entire Indian population. And if we may judge by the appearance of the vast native crowds, their smiles, their mildness, their interest in all the proceedings, this was the case. After all, as Georges Sand once wrote to a discontented politician, the people at least have great common sense.

## IV

### THE STATE BALL

LESS than a hundred years before Horace Walpole commenced his imperishable correspondence ; a little more than a hundred years before *The History of Clarissa Harlowe* set sentimental Europe into floods of tears ; while Innocent X. was struggling in vain against the policy of the Hapsburgs and the decline of the Holy Roman Empire ; while Charles I., of unhappy, if blessed, memory, was fighting his doomed cause with Cromwell ; in the year that Louis Quatorze was born (as some pretend, miraculously), and Richelieu was at the summit of his fortunes ; when America, little valued by the English, was beginning to attract the notice

of French commercial enterprise, thirty years after the founding of Quebec, seventy-four years after St Peter's at Rome was finished, Shah Jehan was building the most magnificent Palace in the East—perhaps in the world—the beautiful Palace of the Moguls at Delhi. It is made of red sandstone and white marble; some of its walls and arches are still inlaid with malachite, lapis-lazuli, bloodstone, agate, cornelian and jasper; there were once silver ceilings, silk carpets, and hangings embroidered with gems; the pillars were hung with brocades; the recesses were filled with china and vases of flowers; treasures of the goldsmith's craft, also, no doubt from Italy and France—the Italy of the Renaissance, and the France of Mary of Medici; beyond doubt there was the famous Peacock Throne—"a sort of large fourpost bed, all made of gold, with two peacocks standing behind it, their tails expanded, and set with sapphires, rubies, emeralds, pearls, and diamonds, while a parrot cut out of a single emerald perched upon the tester." On the

front side of the canopy was a diamond—the Koh-i-noor, now among the Crown Jewels of England.

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#### “A SUPREME PLEASURE-HOUSE”

Tavernier, the jeweller, who was at Delhi in 1665, beheld these wonders, and thought they represented, all told, “two hundred millions of livres.” And the terrible Nadir Shah came from Persia in 1739, drawn sight-seeing by stories of luxury and pomp. He sipped his coffee on the glorious couch ; he dreamed dreams ; he saw visions ; and next day, after watching a massacre of the citizens of Delhi, he broke up the Peacock Throne. But although he took much plunder (valued at eighty millions sterling), he left the proud inscription

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under the cornice, where it remains to this day, ironically triumphant :—

“ If on earth be an Eden of bliss,  
It is this, it is this, it is this.”

Nor could he take away the great Audience Hall, “similar in plan to a Gothic Cathedral,” with its two-and-thirty columns sustaining as many arches, “inlaid with finest work, like the great Duke’s chapel—the Medicean chapel—at Florence”; he could not take away the Jasmine Tower, the gardens, the fourteen courts, the baths, the grilles of alabaster, the little pavilions and kiosks, the nobility of the vast design, the genius of the master-builders. Many descriptions have been written of this Palace, but in giving the rich details one loses the delicacy of the whole effect. A precious stone is not beautiful because it is large, or costly, or extraordinary, but because of its colour, or its position, in some decorative scheme. Carved marble may be easily vulgar. Nothing, indeed, is so repulsive as inferior marble-work. The streets, cemeteries, restored

churches, and modern edifices throughout Europe offer testimony to this fact. It is not the splendour of the Diwan-i-Am and the Diwan-i-Khas, but their exquisite symmetry which enchant the eye ; it is the design of the inlay, not the rarity of the materials employed, which seems to cast upon the walls some far-off reflection from "the City not made with hands." Nevertheless the atmosphere of the Palace, and its appeal to the heart, is that of the earth and the fulness thereof. After two-and-a-half centuries of tragic, mysterious history it stands, true to its inscription, a supreme pleasure-house — the one perfect temple in existence for pride and the flesh.

If one could imagine the Joy of Life wandering restless, homeless, and forgotten through the world, she would halt at last at Shah Jehan's Eden of Bliss and make it her abiding-place. It is perfect, because of all architects — the Hindu, the Buddhist, the Egyptian, the Jew, the Pagan, the Christian — the Mohammedan alone could believe in the permanency and everlasting dominion of the

senses. To him there was no mockery in earthly passions ; to him there was no need of Epicurean philosophy to dissuade his mind from pondering too bitterly on the evanescence of every delight. He did not say, with the old heretic Omar :—

“And if the wine you drink, the lip you press,  
End in the nothing all things end in—Yes ;  
Then fancy while thou art, thou art but what  
Thou shalt be—Nothing. Thou shalt not be less.”

He did not have before him, as the reward for a life of self-abnegation, the indefinable Nirvana, which, according to some, is a country of celestial happiness, to others a state of absolute annihilation, where man is delivered for ever from life, its evils, and its fugitive gladness. To him the absorption of his own soul hereafter in the universal spirit offered no recompense for religious austerities and meditation here ; for him the bliss of Moksha was neither credible nor alluring ; to him there was no blessedness in mourning, no inheritance for the meek and lowly, no vanity in youth, no

folly in love, no snare in bodily beauty, no deception in riches, no adder in the cup, no hidden woe in festivals. And so he was able to create with exultation and security a palace to the greater glory of man. In the gayest capitals of Christendom there is a lurking self-contempt and a certain defiance about the mansions, whether new or old, of the rich. They are built, let us say, to last long enough. Royal abodes are grave and chilling ; the new hotels, restaurants, theatres and music-halls, have a forced brightness ; their gorgeousness is tawdry ; little in them is even tolerable by daylight ; one feels that they were all conceived in melancholy, as a financial speculation for the use of a fatigued, feverish, and unbelieving race.

I had intended to describe the State Ball : and have attempted, instead, to give some idea of the place in which it was held ; for, given uniforms, animated faces, new gowns, jewels, military music, and excitement, one great ball is precisely the same as another. Whether Europeans have the art of enjoying themselves

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naturally, or dancing with grace, or fitting harmoniously in the background of pure romance, are side questions which each of us may answer according to our experience, our prejudices, our education, or our honesty. It cannot be maintained that the average waltz, as a series of movements, is dignified or pretty : it may be amusing, and it is frequently—to use a paradox—a languorous romp. So far as enjoyment is calculable, the guests at Delhi seemed wholly enthusiastic. But among the many charming beings to be seen in the vast crowd, the woman who presented the most romantic appearance and embodied the romantic ideal was Lady Curzon herself. A perpetual reason for this lies, no doubt, in the fragile beauty of her countenance ; it does not follow, however, that the possession of beauty makes, in the modern, for romance. Lady Curzon suggests this rare sentiment, because she does not smear her face with red-and-white washes, nor disfigure her head by the pyramids of curls, pads, fringes, tulle and ribbons, which, pinned on without regard for proportion, balance, or

line, alter many handsome members of English society until they resemble the ignoble advertisements of fashionable wig-makers. English women have, as a rule, far better hair than other Europeans, the Germans excepted ; but they dress it in the most extravagant styles ; they have also fine complexions—which they take pleasure in hiding—and good figures. Nevertheless, they seldom wear their clothes well. Dress counts for so much in picturesqueness : clothes nowadays are made of everything except ideas. Lady Curzon always wears elaborately woven or embroidered materials, but she never overloads them with ornaments ; she does not pile lace on passementerie, mix ostrich plumes with flowers, and sprinkle the whole with spangles ; nor, affecting homeliness, does she trust to a necklace, some bracelets, and a tiara to counterbalance the deficiencies of soiled or ill-made garments ; nor, for the purpose of inspiring the sense of what is called a “presence,” does her hair visibly augment in proportion to the considerableness of the occasion.

Beauty is not given to one woman in many hundreds, but every woman has at least some measure of individuality, and it is surely better to preserve this and be recognised by it, than to put on stereotyped vulgarities which harden the softest features and form the most repellent frame possible to any face. We all feel the attraction of a poetical appearance, and fortunately it depends rather on the atmosphere one can suggest than on the accident of a straight nose, or a fresh complexion, or liquid eyes, or a smiling mouth, or a gentle brow. In speaking of poetry and the poetic, moreover, it should be remembered that there are many kinds of poetry : some of it is peculiar for its vigour and downrightness, its ruggedness and simplicity. A lady, for instance, who determined, on entering a ball-room, to call up the best quotations from Keats, would be foredoomed, I think, to disaster. This reflection brings me back to the Ball at Delhi. There were nearly four thousand persons present, including a number of Chiefs in full dress ; the Duke and Duchess of Connaught and the

Grand Duke of Hesse took part with their Excellencies in the State Lancers ; ladies who had chairs stood upon them in order to watch every figure in that historic dance. At supper, I am told, the following amount of nourishment was gratefully consumed :—

8,000 eggs.	300 partridges.
360 quarts of soup.	94 hams.
1,600 entrées.	130 pheasants.
300 jellies and creams.	150 tongues.
200 dishes of pastry.	9,000 rolls.
300 turkeys.	8 boars' heads.
100 legs of lamb.	1,000 plates of sandwiches.
700 chickens.	150 quarts of ice cream.
400 quails.	850 dishes of sweets.

About three o'clock in the morning the last carriages drove away ; their lights flickered later like fire-flies below the electric globes and great arc-lamps of the camps. The stars which had seen the ancient kings of whom even the stones have kept no record, which had lit the last Emperor of Hindostan on his way forth to his last battle, which had looked upon the majesty and the downfall of the mighty

Moguls, which had trembled at the horrors of the Mutiny, shone down on Hindoos, Mohammedans, and Christians sleepily discussing with their respective associates the brilliant success of the greatest entertainment ever given in the Indian Empire.

## V

### CALCUTTA

EVERY traveller is invited to give his impression of India. Here, on the spot, it is probably an act of flattering courtesy ; at home it must often mean a real desire for news or information. Yet how many people realise, I wonder, that the Province of Bengal alone is three-fourths the size of France ; that the North-West Provinces are nearly equal in area to the whole of Great Britain ; that the Punjab has the same extent as the Kingdom of Italy ; that Oudh is equal to Belgium and Holland together ; that Madras is a little larger than Great Britain and Ireland ; that the Bombay Presidency is about as large as England and Scotland ; that the whole Empire

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under British rule is somewhat larger than Europe without Russia? One might as well ask a tourist, passing for the first time, as quickly as express trains and the necessities of sleeping, eating, resting, and sight-seeing permit, from London to Edinburgh, from there to Killarney, from Queenstown to Paris and Naples, from Sicily to Constantinople and Athens, from Rome to Vienna, Brussels, Stockholm, and Amsterdam, to give his impressions of Europe, its politics, its beauties, its art. To be sure, he will have some impressions. The individual observes what he has been trained to observe, and thus any view, so long as it is sincerely personal, has interest on psychological, if on no other grounds.

One of the classic authorities on India, for example, has described Calcutta briefly as "a town set in a swamp out of which there is only a single carriage road." After that the humblest superficial judgment can but err on the side of elaboration. Another eminent critic gives a report which is even less pro-

mising. "The native portion of Calcutta, although full of wealth, can hardly be surpassed in mere ugliness. People who are comfortably rich are often content to live in hovels ; and among the Zemindars and Rajahs of Bengal, with incomes which even in England would be thought immense, there is hardly one who lives in a house which, in its decoration and architecture, is not detestable." This may not be over severe, yet to the mind it offers no real picture of the city founded by Job Charnock. The charm of Calcutta works slowly, and apart from Government House and its garden, there is nothing which at once, rushing in as certain atmospheres do, fills the imagination ; and there is nothing which, by enchanting grace or romantic history, at once stirs the mind. But the charm is the more enduring because it is so slow, so unassertive, so uncommon. Calcutta, in fact, may be compared with the subtle women of history, whose portraits in State galleries leave us wondering how they altered the fates of Empires and consumed the hearts of men.

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Its founder, Job Charnock, was, we are told, "not a beautiful person. He was a block of rough-hewn British manhood—always a faithful man to the East India Company." In the year 1690—more than one hundred and sixty years after the Portuguese had first cast anchor in the Hoogly—Charnock, with thirty sullen followers, who confused the very name of the place with Golgotha, climbed the eastern banks to the three ruined mud huts which made up the cotton thread bazaar of Sutaneti. Its swampy land sloped away into a forest path which led to the shrine of Kali, Kali,—the indefinable and obscene goddess of destruction, with a black face, three eyes (symbolising the present, the past, and the future), a long gilt tongue hanging out of her mouth, four arms, her clothing a garland of men's skulls. The forest path has been cleared away, the jungle and the marshes are now built upon ; but Kali is still worshipped. Goats and kids are sacrificed to her daily ; men and women, prostrated on the ground, worship her till the priest closes the

door of her temple each night. It is almost impossible to discover just what is felt about, and feared, and, it may be, loved in Kali. She is there, and she remains, with her history and her secrets and her power, eternally mysterious, eternally baffling — a world of symbols to the metaphysician, a menace to the ignorant, a reality to the despairing.

“The midday halt of Charnock—  
Grew a city.  
As the fungus sprouts chaotic from its bed  
So it spread—  
Chance-directed, chance-erected—”

Charnock himself spent two terrible years there, struggling against fever, the monsoons, the heat, the discouragement and disloyalty of his men, the ever-threatening death “in the long pool.” It rose at last, and called him, but his city is now among the first in Asia, and holds the fifth place among the cities of the world.

A stranger who arrives at Howrah for the first time will have to wait in a large railway-station, resembling the Gare du Nord, while

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natives from all districts, squatting or perched by their bedding and tin boxes, maintain a chatter as incessant as the crowing of the crows ; and half-naked coolies, urged on by bearers, some in cap and livery, some in white linen suits and turbans, stagger with luggage to the bullock-carts and "ticca-gharries," The "ticca-gharry," which is the cab, the *fiacre*, the gondola of the nation, deserves a whole treatise to itself. Those of the first class resemble the old-fashioned barouches—relics of a once noble establishment, which one sees occasionally in some provincial joiner's yard ; others are closed, and one sits behind doors and panels like shutters ; others are much the same as the familiar "fly," which most people have used, but few indeed have ever seen built. It is tolerably certain that they are never new, and their career, which starts apparently before the beginning of time, is unhampered by stuffed cushions and unassisted by springs. The "ticca-gharry" is generally clean, and the drivers, if one delivers a steady course of instructions in a loud,

threatening, and indefatigable voice, are honestly eager to reach some kind of destination. But they must be watched and guided, or they will rush into every obstacle, whether a wall or a lamp-post, and perpetually lose the way, which, failing constant admonition, they seem never able to find.

As I crossed the bridge over the Hoogly, I was reminded, for a moment, of Dublin, of Cork, of the quarter near the great wharves of New York, of the earliest streets in old Boston. Then I saw the Hindoos bathing, and the curious, irrelevant, unexpected association of memories faded away, and I was conscious only of the strangeness of the whole scene. On the east bank of the river, the first white or yellow buildings with green shutters, the warehouses, the mean shops, and the saloons—so curiously like those of the Bowery in New York—are not imposing. The individuality of Calcutta is not felt till one reaches the Maidan, a plain about a mile and a half in diameter, bounded by the river and Fort William on one side, and

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on the other by buildings of every sort, from the principal hotels to the Presidency jail, from the fashionable shops to the Cathedral, from the theatre to the private villas of merchants and others, from the clubs to the Bishop's Palace. Some of the streets leading from the main road are Italian or Spanish in character; beautiful white or purple or blue vines hang over the garden walls and gateways; the houses have fine verandahs, pavilions and balconies, imposing porticoes and large, green-shuttered windows. Much time is spent daily in paying calls between noon and two o'clock—a custom which, apart from its inconvenience, has compensations. A morning drive through these attractive roads and rows, where the leading officials and their wives live during the season, is a pleasure which gains by familiarity—new effects of light and shade, fresh aspects, unexpected notes of colour, constantly strike the artistic sense. In India the best domestic architecture is admirable, and it suggests—what the same thing too often fails to suggest in the cities—

of Europe—individual existences. Anatole France has pointed out, in a passage of sardonic humour, the ignominy of the huge, modern flat-buildings, where the routine of modern life under civilisation, deprived of any possibility of reserve, or mystery, or sentiment, is symbolised by row upon row of sleeping, eating and living rooms, all identical in plan, position, and outlook, and differing only in the prices paid for their rent or the graduated luxuriousness of their furniture.

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#### AT NIGHT

The business, native, and less fashionable streets of Calcutta, again, are cosmopolitan ; at points one can easily be reminded of the great avenues in the less-frequented parts of modern Rome. It never suggests London, however, or Paris, or Berlin. Although the

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French influence was once considerable, and the English influence is now supreme, the winter seat of the Indian Government is wholly un-French and un-English. Illuminated—as the Orientals understand illumination—it becomes beyond description picturesque—the crowds on the pavement, the thousands of lights placed on bamboo frames, the barbarous music,—(it is claimed, nevertheless, that the musical scale of India is doubly more delicate than ours); the archways and roof gardens hung with Japanese lamps; the odd open shops, which are in reality three-walled rooms without windows, or so many miniature stages; the effigies of gods and goddesses; the Nautch girls made of cheap balloon silk, and worked ingeniously by wires, the gaudy prints of the Royal Family and their Excellencies, drawn by native artists, and all made to resemble, in some curious way, the Hindoo deities. Then the river is covered with lighted ships, and the noble designs of the chief public buildings stand out in lines of disciplined fire, where, now and again, a

lithe coolie, as dark, deft, and noiseless as some insect on a vine, balancing himself at a great height on the framework of bamboo, re-lights some flickering or faded lamp.

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#### THE PUBLIC GARDENS

In the afternoon one can hear the band play in the Eden Gardens, or walk in the Zoological Gardens—of their kind the prettiest in the world. There, too, the lion's roar seems as natural as the twittering of swallows in England. At sunset the greedy otters (Dante himself speaks of their greediness) squeal at every passer-by for more supper; the flamingoes by the lake strut through their *pavane*—the primeval measure of the Court minuet—one may wonder at the mandrill's blue cheeks and scarlet nose. Then

there is the racecourse—a brilliant scene on Saturday afternoons. The Botanical Gardens—the Kew of the East—is on the other side of the river. Wise people spend the day there, wandering down shady alleys, resting in palm-houses made without glass, telling stories about the famous banyan tree, and making unpardonable mistakes in botany.

## VI

### ALIPORE, BERRACKPORE, AND DARJEELING

At Alipore stands the villa once occupied by Warren Hastings. Some maintain that the place is haunted ; certainly it has, as it were, a hushed life. The empty chairs and sofas in the drawing-room seem occupied ; one fears to speak lest one should break rudely upon a private if unheard conversation. Are the once pleasant rooms inhabited by the unseen and the inaudible ? Could one, by peering long enough, see some ghostly shadow of the Baroness Imhof and her auburn ringlets ? Did Mrs Grand ever look out of these windows and dream, by moonlight, that she would one day win her way through the Court of the

great Napoleon, marry Talleyrand, and become the Princess of Benevento? Poor phantom Princess! Even the name and inscription on her tomb in Paris was made so "readily effaceable" that not the " slightest indication of it now remains." But perhaps she danced once, or oftener, at Alipore; perhaps she played cards there. Historians think not. I fancied I saw her standing by a pillar—"the tall and elegant nymph" of the memoir writers, "with more feminine softness than strength of mind; with eyes of the brightest blue; with golden curls; very beautiful, very indolent; her nose slightly turned up." Lord Curzon has bought this historic property, and it is now used as a guest house for the native Princes when they visit Calcutta; but its early associations are still overpowering. It was inhabited by the restless and the unhappy, and the faintest breeze there on the hottest day comes laden with sighs.

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**“THE MOST DELIGHTFUL HOUSE IN INDIA”**

For repose and joy there is the Viceroy's residence at Barrackpore, where the birds whistle in the seventy dialects of Bengal, and sing “cuckoo” in Hindostanee. One would, by choice, arrive in the evening, when the hundreds of fire-flies dart through the air, and the pergolas leading from the river seem like the mysterious groves which surrounded every Palace of every Arabian Princess in the fairy tales. A vine of bougainvillea covers the entrance. This splendid web of purple flowers shelters the verandah from the sun by day, and by night makes it as fresh as an arbour in a Florentine garden. Roses grow by the thousand at Barrackpore ; the rose orchard at twilight—which comes and goes as swiftly as it does in the Far West—is one of the unforgettable acres of the earth ; the perfume is as soft as the air ; the hues, without blending, glow in fragrant and serene contrast ; the beds are

measured and orderly—the red, the yellow, the white, the pink, are each in their own rows. Further on one can find the tall eucharist lilies edging along the path; violets fill another large space, tube-roses another, morning-glories another, mignonette another. In the spring one can hear the nightingales sing. Whenever the house is occupied, kites, which are almost tame, hover near the banyan trees, hoping to snatch some food from the lunch tables which are spread there. The Viceroy and Lady Curzon spend their Sundays during the winter at this villa, which was built originally by Lord Minto early in the last century. Lord Canning lived there; Lady Canning's monument, with its pathetic inscription, is in the grounds. It was the favourite home of Lord and Lady Lansdowne. It must be, for Europeans, the most delightful house in India. The journey both ways by launch on the Hoogly offers a living chronicle of Anglo-Indian civilisation. One sees ironworks, buildings new and old, ghats where they burn the dead, bazaars, hospitals, Hindoo temples, Mo-

hammedan mosques, cotton, gun, and sugar factories, jetties, villas, gardens. And then it must never be forgotten that the Hoogly belongs to the sacred river; the religion of centuries moves in its uncertain current and breathes from its shifting waters.

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#### FROM THE SEA TO THE CLOUDS

From Calcutta to the Himalayas is from the sea to the clouds—something less than 400 miles as a journey. You cross the Ganges by moonlight—if you choose the right date—and, in the early morning, after a night in the train, you reach the mountains by the little steam tram which resembles a toy, and runs on a line which cost in engineering about twenty-seven lakhs of rupees. This unpretentious, miraculous machine glides first through

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swamps and a region of forest trees ; it rushes over the Mahanadi River, passes by tea plantations and bungalows, woods and tracts of jungle ; then, with turns and bends and loops and backings and windings, the climb above the valley begins in earnest, towards the peaks —1000 feet each hour. The point aimed at is 7000 feet, when you descend a few hundred feet to Darjeeling. This exhilarating experience seems perfect until you take the journey homewards by trolley, when you have no engine or other cars in front to hide the magnificent scene or the amazing intricacies of the road. Darjeeling itself is not so striking in its beauty as Lucerne or Chamounix or St Moritz. It may be questioned whether it is beautiful at all. The town has no plan, and it straggles apparently over several hillsides. But three—to name no more—of its attractions offer atonement for any shortcomings in its symmetry—the excursion to Tiger Hill before sunrise, when the lights in the valley look like fallen stars ; the descent, through enchanting scenes, to the meeting of the Rungeet and the

Teesta Rivers; and the walk in the native bazaar.

Comparisons between the Himalayas and the Alps are commonly, and I think wrongly, made. The vast, vague, and sentimental terms applied to mountain scenery are in the vocabulary of every tourist, and cover pages of every guide-book; unless one has something to offer which is peculiarly illuminating or profound on this tortured subject, silence is best. Mountain regions, moreover, demand the most faithful study. Let me confess that I have not the audacity to attempt a description of the sunlight on Kinchinjunga and Mount Everest, merely because I once rose at four in the morning and saw that glory. As well spend an hour at daybreak with a pilgrimage outside St Peter's at Rome, and write an exposition of Renaissance architecture. One receives a stupendous and stupefying impression of forces unrealised, heights unreachable, depths incalculable, worlds elsewhere, cities without sites, towering, it may be, between the earth we know a little and the sky we

question in vain. We may send our souls there, but we must leave our language, our daily similes and metaphors, our secret idols, our weights and measures, behind.

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#### BETWEEN THE MOUNTAINS AND THE BAZAAR

The descent to the Teesta valley means a day of pure romance in the Spanish manner. You pass tea-gardens, plum trees in blossom, oak, chestnut, and magnolia, laurel, hydrangea, rhododendron, and palm trees, slopes and chasms, purple hills and black peaks, the dark green river running between sands as white as snow, the singing peasants, the dark-eyed children, the pig driver with his pigs, the boys driving cattle, the nut sellers, the drinking booths, the girls washing by the way-

side, the tea-gatherers. How is it possible to convey so many sights and sounds, so much colour and movement, such light and heat, on paper? At Darjeeling my favourite haunt was the bazaar. Here one saw a row of barbers, a row of tailors, a row of silver and turquoise dealers, a row of moneylenders from the plains for the reckless nature lovers of the hills. One could buy skins of beasts, turquoise earrings silver girdles, prints of the gods, bangles, dreadful drugs from the native apothecary, prayer wheels, rice, maize, yellow ochre and powdered carmine for one's face, bangles and dress materials. The girls often have their cheeks stained horribly with the blood of goats or chickens, and they wear their wealth in necklaces made of rupees—for which they are sometimes murdered. The blind beggar who waved his prayer-wheel and chanted the act of worship—the chant was almost Gregorian—“God is in the lotus flower ; God is everywhere ; hail to him of the lotus and the jewel”—pleased me most. And always, between the mountains and the bazaar, I saw the poles with

the prayer flags—long slips of linen inscribed with texts—fluttering in the wind, to dismay evil spirits and offer favourable omens to the devout passer-by.

DECEMBER 1902—FEBRUARY 1903.

# PROGRAMME

## DELHI

December 1902—

Monday, 29th. State Arrival, 11.30 a.m.

Tuesday, 30th. Opening of the Arts Exhibition,  
11 a.m.

Wednesday, 31st. Massed Bands on Polo Ground,  
4 p.m.

January 1903—

Thursday, 1st. Durbar.

State Dinner.

Friday, 2nd. Native Garden-Party in the Victoria Gardens, 3.30 to 5 p.m.  
Fireworks, 10 p.m.

Saturday, 3rd. Assault-at-Arms.

Investiture, 10 p.m.

Sunday, 4th. Church Service, 11 a.m.  
Massed Bands on Polo Ground in afternoon.

Monday, 5th. Native Review.  
Assault-at-Arms.

Tuesday, 6th. Football Final Match in afternoon.  
Manipur and Gilgit Polo.  
State Ball.

Wednesday, 7th. Final Hockey Match in morning.  
Final International Polo Match,  
3.30 p.m.

Thursday, 8th. Review, 11 a.m.

Friday, 9th. Final Indian Army Polo Match,  
3.30 p.m.  
Massed Bands on Polo Ground.  
Distribution of Prizes.  
Evening Party to Native Chiefs.

Saturday, 10th. Departure.

## VICEROY'S CAMP

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H.S.H. The Grand Duke of Hesse.  
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Sir E. F. Law, Member of Council, and Lady Law.  
Major-General Sir E. Elles, Member of Council,  
Lady Elles and Miss Teague.  
Mr A. T. Arundel, Member of Council, Mrs and  
Miss Arundel.  
Mr D. C. J. Ibbetson, Member of Council, Mrs and  
Miss Ibbetson.  
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The Duke and Duchess of Marlborough.  
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Captain and Mrs H. Lindsay.  
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Mr E. T. Reed.  
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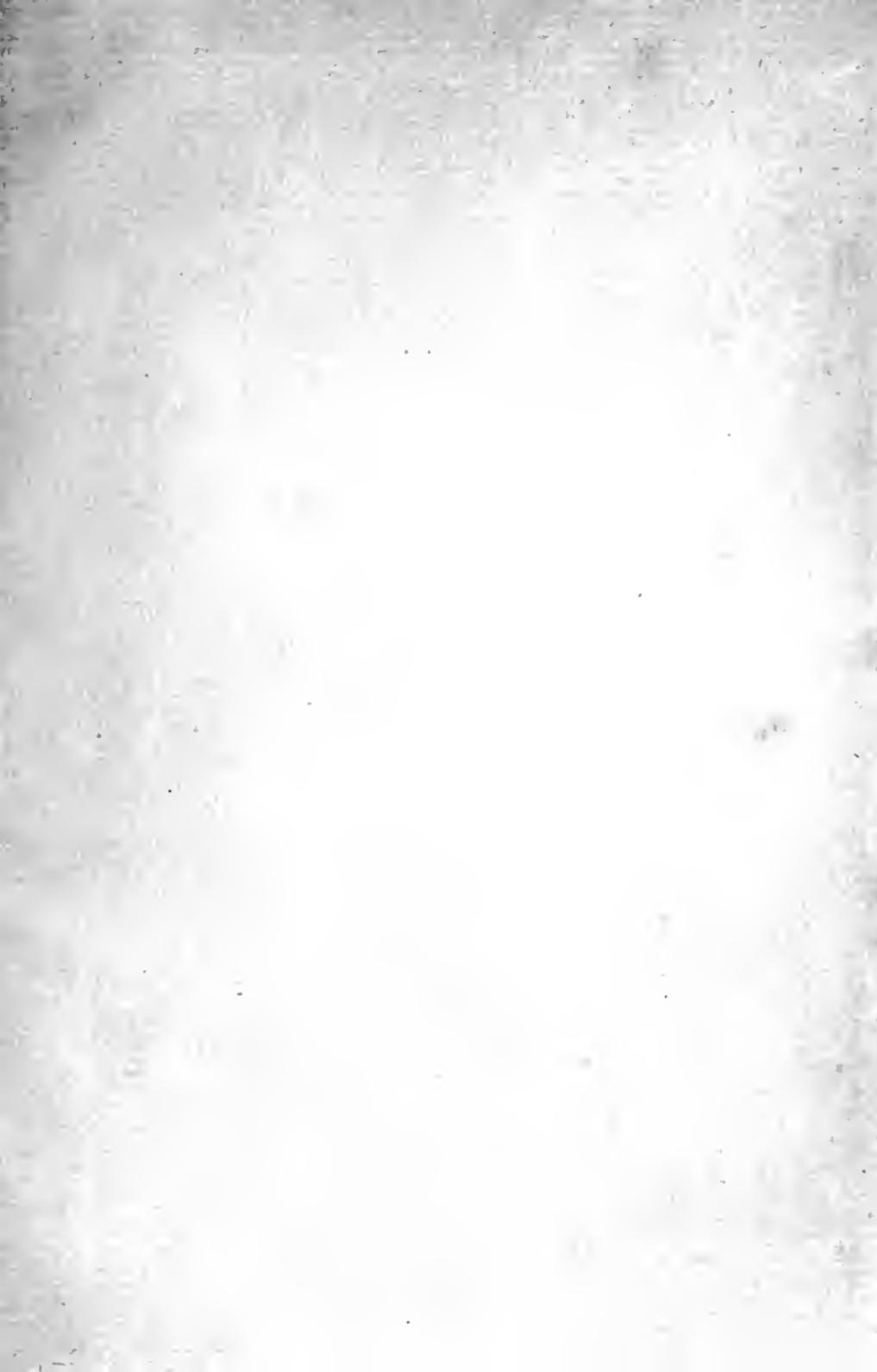
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